

## **Funding framework**

for funding rigorous impact evaluations (RIEs) as part of the DEval pilot funding programme for RIEs.

### **1. Programme objectives**

The German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) funds the RIE funding programme with funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). German universities and research institutions are eligible for funding to implement RIEs.

The overarching goal of the RIE funding programme is to strengthen the systematic mainstreaming of RIEs in German development cooperation in a manner appropriate to the subject matter. Two central tasks contribute to this goal:

1. Implementing RIEs: The number of RIEs has been increased in a manner appropriate to the subject matter.
2. Using the RIE results: RIEs are used systematically for learning, for accountability and for impact communication.

### **2. Eligible measures**

RIEs or components of an RIE with an experimental or quasi-experimental design (possibly supplemented by qualitative elements) are eligible for funding. The project concerned must be a self-contained evaluation project.

The RIE must evaluate German development cooperation measures that are at least partly funded by the BMZ. This means that a development cooperation organisation based in Germany is (jointly) responsible for managing the measure to be evaluated. The German development cooperation organisation must reliably guarantee the pledged support for the necessary RIE implementation steps. In cases where the RIE implementation cannot be ensured without doubt, DEval reserves the right to decide on funding eligibility.

### **3. Target group and disciplines**

The programme targets academics in German universities and public research institutions from all disciplines with completed academic education. A declaration of support from a project-implementing development cooperation organisation is required. Development cooperation organisations include governmental implementing organisations, church organisations, civil-society organisations and foundations based in Germany that implement development cooperation measures.

### **4. Eligible applicants**

State-owned and officially recognised German universities, university hospitals and non-university research institutions based in Germany that are recognised as non-profit organizations and conduct their own research are eligible to apply.

### **5. Type of funding**

The funding takes the form of shortfall financing.

The selected RIE research projects receive a funding commitment and sign a forwarding agreement. DEval will finance the funded RIE research projects by transferring a grant from the BMZ under public law. The institute deliberately refrains from establishing an agreement for pecuniary interest governing the procurement of a service with an enforceable fulfilment obligation. The objectives of the pilot funding programme for RIE lie in the interest of the Federal Government.

*This English translation exclusively serves informational purposes and solely the German version of the document is binding.*

The managers of the RIE research projects in Germany have a responsibility to DEval to ensure that the project is implemented as planned and that the funds are used properly.

DEval provides the funding commitment in the context of the funding decision, taking account of the General Auxiliary Provisions for Grants for Project Support.

## **6. Forwarding the grant**

It is possible for the supported German institution to forward part of the grant (up to a maximum of 40% of the total budget). The prerequisite is that the involvement of a cooperation partner in Germany or abroad is necessary for the RIE research project to be successful and no sufficient own funds are available, or positive effects in the sense of evaluation capacity development (ECD) are to be expected.

In the funding plan for the funding application, the expenditure items that are to be forwarded must be marked accordingly. If the specific forwarding items are not known at the time of the funding application (before the agreement is concluded), any expenses that are to be forwarded can be presented as own expenses in the funding plan to begin with. In the event that the intention to forward the grant is only established after the agreement has been concluded, DEval's approval must be obtained by means of an amendment application (adjustment of the RIE research proposal and the funding plan).

The forwarding shall take place on the basis of a forwarding agreement.

The forwarding recipient's proof of use and the corresponding audit certificate must be enclosed with the proof of use submitted to DEval.

## **7. Applying as a research consortium**

It is possible to submit an application as a consortium. The prerequisite is that this is necessary for the RIE research project to be successful and no sufficient own funds are available, or positive effects in the sense of evaluation capacity development (ECD) are to be expected.

The consortium must be led by a German institution that is eligible to apply (*see 4. Eligible applicants*). This institution must also assume responsibility for project management. The members of the consortium may be state-owned or officially recognised universities or non-university research institutions that are recognised as non-profit organizations and conduct their own research. They must be based in Germany or other European countries.

The recipient of the grant is the consortium, represented by the consortium leader. The approved funds will be transferred to the consortium leader and are forwarded by the latter to the other members. In the funding plan for the funding application, the expenditure items that are to be forwarded in the consortium must be marked accordingly.

A forwarding agreement will be concluded between the consortium, represented by the consortium leader, and DEval. The partners of the consortium must additionally conclude a consortium agreement, by which the consortium partners empower the consortium leader to fulfil the terms of the agreement with DEval.

## **8. Eligible expenditures**

See Annex 1 "Eligible expenditures".

## **9. Funding period**

The earliest possible start date for the funded RIE research projects is 1 March 2023. The maximum term for the funded RIE research projects is 2.5 years and ends on 30 September 2025 at the latest.

## **10. Amount of funding**

During the funding period the maximum amount for the funding is approximately 365,000 euros, split between the budget years as follows:

2023: up to 110,000 euros

2024: up to 144,000 euros

2025: up to 113,000 euros

Higher grants are possible when justified in exceptional cases, but must be checked with regard to the availability of funds and approval. In order to ensure the implementation of the RIE research projects even without higher grants, corresponding activities should be marked as optional in the planning. It should also be possible to implement the RIE without these optional activities. In the case of changes in project implementation, it is possible to apply to DEval for additional funds mid-year.

## **11. Submitting an application**

The complete funding application in English must be submitted by the deadline exclusively via mail to [RIE-Fund@DEval.org](mailto:RIE-Fund@DEval.org). A complete application comprises:

- **RIE research proposal**
- **Annex 1:** Unterstützungsschreiben EZ-Organisation (Letter of support; only available in German)
- **Annex 2:** Befürwortung der Hochschul- Forschungseinrichtung (Endorsement of the university administration; only available in German)
- **Annex 3:** Finanzplan (Funding plan; only available in German)
- **Annex 4:** Vollmacht Projektassistenz (Power of attorney project assistant; only available in German)
- **When transferring funds to a third party:** project description and funding plan of the recipient(s) of the transfer (*Please use your own templates and for the financial plan the one provided by us*)
- **When applying as a consortium:** funding plan of the other members of the consortium (*Please use the template provided for the financial plan*)

Any changes to the funding plan, changes to the RIE research proposal and subsequently submitted or changed documents cannot be taken into account after the application deadline.

## **12. Application deadline**

The deadline for application is 30 November 2022.

## **13. Selection procedure**

DEval decides on the funding based on the assessment of the applications by a selection committee. The selection commission will consist of up to two international RIE experts, up to two BMZ employees and up to two DEval employees. Where required, independent external appraisers will support them by providing written statements on the applications.

Only complete applications will be considered. All applications will be checked with regard to research ethics. If any deficiencies emerge with regard to issues of research ethics, the applicants will be given a chance to rectify them. If this is not possible, the submitted RIE research project application will be rejected and excluded from the selection procedure.

Fundamental issues relating to research ethics include:

- Are the principles of *Do No Harm* taken into account in the best possible way?
- Are human-rights principles implemented in the research process?
- Are research-ethics standards and evaluation standards adhered to?

It will also be checked whether the proposal convincingly takes account of logistic or political obstacles and risks that might endanger the completion of the RIE research project (e.g. implementation capacity or official authorisation). Moreover, the appropriateness of the requested funds will be checked and the selection commission can instigate cuts in funding where necessary.

The selection commission will assess and select funded RIE research projects based on three criteria: “Relevance to development policy”, “Quality of the project” and “Usage and partner orientation”. The rating scale ranges from 0 points (criterion not met at all) to 10 points (criterion completely met). The three marks for the individual categories for each application will be aggregated to form an overall mark. This aggregation will take account of the weighting of the individual criteria. Based on the individual marks from the selection commission members, an average mark for the respective category will be calculated with an equal weighting for each application. Any proposals that receive an average mark of 3.0 points or less in a single category, or an overall mark of less than 5.0 points, will be rejected. The applications that obtain the highest overall marks will be funded. In the case of proposals with equivalent marks, the selection commission may give precedence to proposals that contribute to a more diverse distribution of supporting organisations, academic institutions or topics across the funding programme.

If a large number of applications are submitted, DEval may preselect applications for the selection commission based on defined criteria. Applications that clearly do not meet the minimum requirement of 3.0 points per criterion, or that receive an overall mark of less than 5.0 points in the weighted average, would be excluded during the preselection. This ensures that the selection commission is able to select the applications to fund on time.

The individual criteria are as follows:

Development policy relevance (30%):

1. **Relevance to development policy:** To what extent does the RIE research project address an issue of relevance to development policy (development policy relevance considering the German development policy portfolio, the German development policy strategy and also for the partner country)?

Quality of the project (40%):

2. **Academic quality and relevance:** Does the RIE research project address an issue of academic relevance? Are the proposed methods rigorous and possible to implement? Is the proposed RIE research project suitable for making a substantial contribution towards closing gaps in specialist and/or methodological knowledge?
3. **Feasibility and efficiency:** Is the planning for the RIE research project realistic? How is the economic efficiency of the RIE research project to be rated?
4. **Team qualifications:** Does the team have the corresponding specialist, methodological and regional expertise?

Usage and partner orientation (30%):

5. **Usage perspective:** Do realistic, well thought-out plans exist as to how the findings can be made useful for the evaluating development cooperation project, the implementing organisation, the project partners and for development cooperation as a whole?
6. **Partner integration:** Are academic partners from the Global South integrated into the project and in what form? Are positive impacts to be expected with a view to evaluation capacity development (ECD)? How are the development cooperation project partners involved in the evaluation?

## **14. Obligations towards DEval**

### ***DEval supervision and sounding board***

The DEval team will supervise the implementation of each of the funded RIE research projects in regular exchanges (at least once or twice a year). This supervision by DEval should be incorporated into the work of a sounding board or another specialist supervision committee for the respective RIE research projects. Ideally, alongside the development cooperation organisation managing the project, the academics responsible for the RIE research project and DEval, this sounding board should also include representatives of development cooperation project partners, representatives of the target group and other academics (for example, from the partner countries). The supervision by DEval includes the option of commenting on essential steps, such as the data collection strategy. There is no obligation to implement the comments. The aim is an informed exchange that ideally provides incentives to improve the respective RIE research projects. Further supervision and support by DEval is possible subject to agreement.

### ***Data***

The research data collected in conjunction with the funding programme and the accompanying materials must be submitted to DEval and the respective development cooperation partner organisation in a distributable format within six months of completion of the respective data collection. DEval's right to use and process the data relates at this point in time to the research data collected for DEval for accompanying analyses (see "Additional data to be collected"). This also comprises further information such as sociodemographic information. The right to use and process the data of the respective development cooperation partner organisation relates at this point in time to research data that is necessary for internal analyses or internal project monitoring.

DEval will provide an electronic solution for transmitting the research data in accordance with the relevant data security requirements. DEval provides a consent form for data collection, pointing out that the data will be passed on to DEval for accompanying analyses.

The grantee has an obligation to make the research data gained as part of the project available – including the tools and documentation used. This data must be made available following project completion at the latest, in a distributable form, in adherence with the FAIR principles, in a suitable research data centre or repository, ideally one that is recognised by the German Data Forum. The aim is to allow long-term data backup for replications and secondary evaluations in accordance with good scientific practice. An effort should be made to ensure transparent documentation of the research process and the research data using platforms such as the Open Science Framework.

To ensure that the data can be passed on to a suitable institution, the grantee must adhere to research data management standards (you can find an overview at the following URL: <https://forschungsdaten.info/en/>).

### ***Additional data to be collected for accompanying DEval analyses***

DEval reserves the right to specify around ten questions that must be asked during every data collection for each promoted RIE research project. In addition, it may specify around four questions that relate to standard BMZ indicators. All questions will be made available to the grantees before the beginning of the first data collection in the respective research project. The grantee must make the provisional questionnaire for the respective collection available to DEval 14 days before data collection in each case. Any comments regarding the data to be collected for DEval must be implemented.

### ***Disbursement procedure***

Following the request for funds by the grantee, the funds will always be paid for two months at a time. The deadlines for the requests for funds are 15 February, 15 April, 15 June, 15 August, 15 October and 15 December respectively. The requested funds are paid out on six key dates per year, on the 1st of the month following the request for funds (1 March, 1 May, 1 July, 1 September, 1 November, 1 January). Deviations in the case of the first funds request are possible depending on the beginning of the agreement. Details on requesting funds can be found in the forwarding agreement.

### ***Proof of funds and status reports***

By the 28 February of each year, annual interim reports must be drawn up in accordance with the General Auxiliary Provisions for Grants for Project Support for the past budget year. These reports must include both a financial report and a status report. The financial report is to be drawn up mid-year from the two-month reports that are sent with the fund requests. The financial two-month reports must be submitted on 15 February, 15 April, 15 June, 15 August, 15 October and 15 December. They are each based on the two previous months. The final report (proof of use statement) must be submitted no more than two months after the end of the approved period, and at the latest on 31 October 2025. Details on reporting can be found in the forwarding agreement.

## **15. Annexes to the funding framework**

### **1. Eligible expenditures**

## **16. Form templates for the application**

- RIE research proposal
- Annex 1: Unterstützungsschreiben EZ-Organisation (Letter of support; only available in German)
- Annex 2: Befürwortung der Hochschul- Forschungseinrichtung (Endorsement of the university administration; only available in German)
- Annex 3: Finanzplan (Funding plan; only available in German)
- Annex 4: Vollmacht Projektassistenz (Power of attorney project assistant; only available in German)

## **17. Contact**

### **DEval – Deutsches Evaluierungsinstitut der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit gGmbH**

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If you have any questions about the type of funding or eligible expenses, please contact our Head of Budget and Accounting. If you have any questions on other topics of our funding framework, please contact our Funding programme team leader.